Bennettazhia

Bennettazhia is a genus of pterosaur (flying reptile).

In 1928 Charles Gilmore named a new species of *Pteranodon*: *P. oregonensis*. A humerus (holotype **MPUC V.126713**), two fused dorsal vertebrae and the broken-off end of some joint bone had been unearthed from the Lower Cretaceous (Albian) beds of the Hudspeth Formation in Wheeler County, in the state of Oregon, USA, to which the specific epithet refers. Gilmore noted similarities to *Nyctosaurus* though the specimens were larger.

In 1989 S. Christopher Bennett concluded that the remains might be those of a member of the Azhdarchidae instead of a pteranodontid. Russian paleontologist Lev Nesov therefore in 1991 named a new azhdarchid genus: *Bennettazhia*. The genus name honours Bennett and combines his name with Persian *azhdarha*, "dragon", a reference to *Azhdarcho*, the type genus of the Azhdarchidae. Bennett himself in 1994 changed his opinion and stated that it belonged to the Dsungaripteridae. Wellnhofer (1991), Peters (1997), Kellner (2003) and Unwin (2003) left it as belonging to the Pterodactyloidea *incertae sedis*.

In 2007 American biologist Michael Habib revealed the result of a study by CAT-scan of the type specimen. The humerus, 183 millimetres long, is uncrushed, which is uncommon for a pterosaur fossil and therefore offered a rare opportunity to investigate the bone structure. Apart from the thin bone wall, the humerus was filled with a spongy tissue consisting of trabeculae, very thin bone layers and struts, forming a light yet strong construction. Habib inferred that such strength would have allowed even very large pterosaurs to launch themselves from the ground using their forelimbs. The same investigation made a better classification possible. The humerus has an elongated deltopectoral crest that is unwarped. Both dsungaripterids and azhdarchoids show this feature, but only the latter group is typified by such a very thin outer bone wall. Habib concluded that *Bennetazhia* was a member of the Azhdarchoidea, a more encompassing group than the Azhdarchidae.

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Bennettazhia

Temporal range: Early Cretaceous, 100 Ma

Pre€ € O S D C P T J K PgN

Skeletal diagram of *Bennettazhia oregonensis*

Scientific classification

Kingdom:	Animalia
Phylum:	Chordata
Order:	†Pterosauria
Suborder:	†Pterodactyloidea
Clade:	†Tapejaromorpha
Genus:	†*Bennettazhia* Nesov, 1991

Type species

†***Pteranodon oregonensis*** Gilmore, 1928

Species

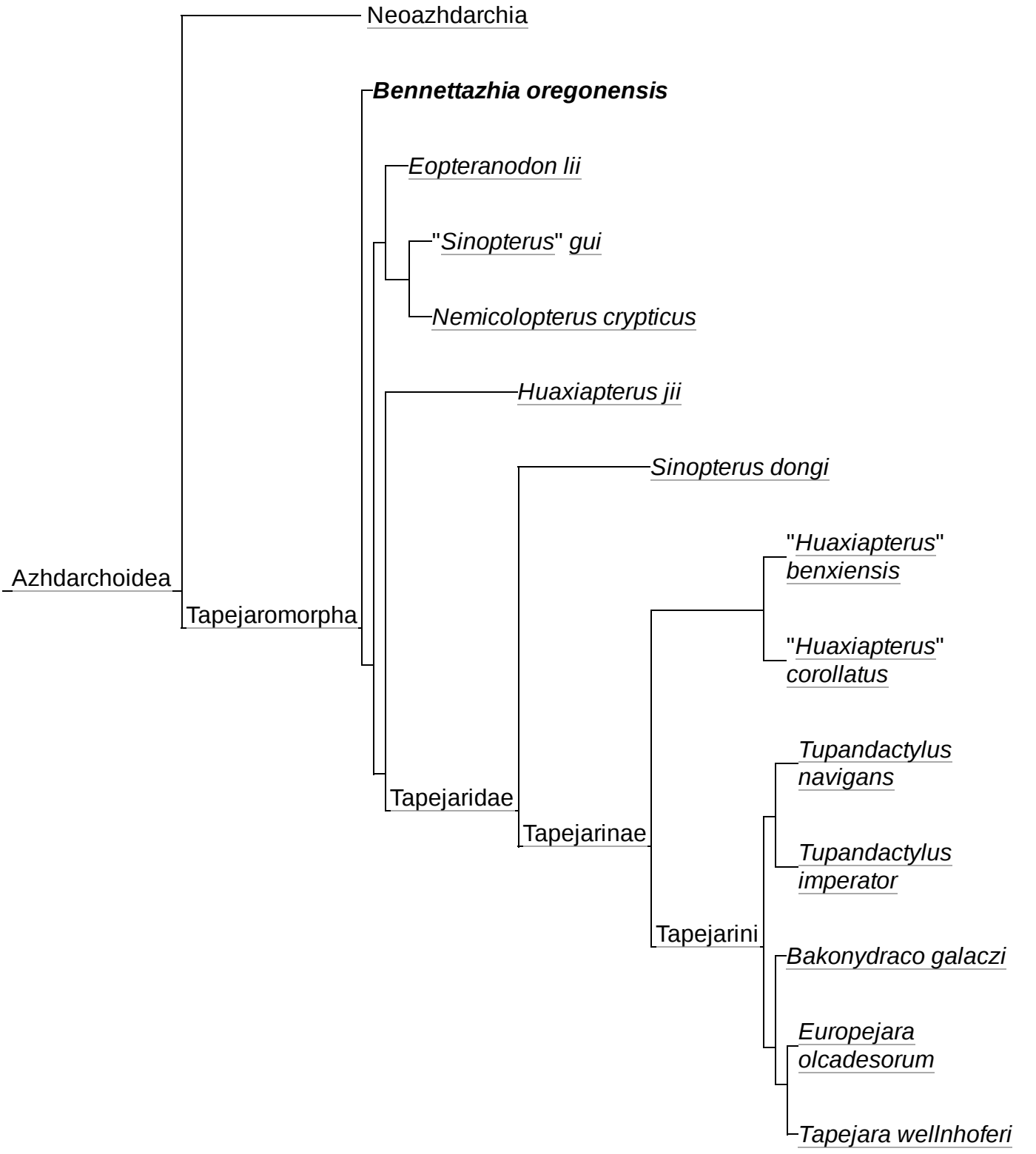
- †***B. oregonensis*** (Gilmore, 1928)

Synonyms

- *Pteranodon oregonensis* Gilmore, 1928

Classification

The cladogram below follows the 2014 analysis Andres and colleagues.[1]



See also

- Timeline of pterosaur research

- List of pterosaurs

References

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- Michael Habib (2007), "Structural characteristics of the humerus of *Bennettazhia oregonensis* and their implications for specimen diagnosis and azhdarchoid biomechanics", p. 16 in: *Flugsaurier: The Wellnhofer pterosaur meeting*, Bavarian State Collection for Palaeontology, Munich 2007, [Abstract]

External links

- The Pterosaur Database (pdf) (https://web.archive.org/web/20100928072607/http://www.pterosaur.co.uk/species/LCP/Bennettazhia-001.pdf)

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